



# U.S. State & Territorial Census Records

FamilySearch

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## **I. Value of using state and territorial census records**

- a. Non-federal censuses help fill in the gaps in the years between the federal censuses. State and territorial census records may have asked different or unusual questions.
- b. All census records
  - i. Help identify family members and show changes over time.
  - ii. Show neighbors and possible kin
  - iii. Show residence, a key to finding further records
- c. Why were state and territorial censuses taken?
  - i. To petition for statehood
  - ii. To apportion the legislature
  - iii. For taxation purposes
- d. They were most often taken in non-federal census years

## **II. Discovering what census records were created**

- a. State Census Register
  - i. Hard bound volumes 1-3 are located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Reference Desk and in the Reference areas
  - ii. Digital version of the books can be accessed through the FHL catalog by performing a title search – State Census Register or call number search 973 X23us Vol. 1-3
- b. FamilySearch Wiki
  - i. Search the terms – United States Census State Census. Scroll down to the State, Territorial and Colonial censuses section. Click on the state name
  - ii. Search the terms – [state name] census. Scroll down to the State, Territorial and Colonial censuses section

### **III. Where to find the census records**

- a. Online Records
  - i. FamilySearch Historical Records
  - ii. Ancestry.com
  - iii. FamilySearch Wiki
- b. At the Family History Library
  - i. Use the *State Census Register*, FHL book 973 X23us Vol. 1-3, available at the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Reference Desks and the Reference areas
  - ii. Use the Family History Library Catalog, "Place" search
- c. Internet Sources
  - i. [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
  - ii. Websites
    - 1. State Archives
    - 2. State Historical Societies
    - 3. State Libraries

### **IV. Tips for successful census searching**

- a. Indexes: indexes are your best friend. Know what kind of index it is
  - i. Every name index
  - ii. Surname index
  - iii. Heads of household and strays index
  - iv. Soundex or Miracode index
  - v. Town, county, state or nationwide index
  - vi. Multi-volume or multi-year indexes
- b. Limitations of the non-Federal censuses
  - i. Need to know the locality where your ancestor lived
  - ii. Incomplete: May not include all of the existing counties
  - iii. Many are not indexed

### **V. Basic census strategy**

- a. Document and analyze
  - i. Be thorough—find and document
  - ii. Analyze in a community context
  - iii. Keep looking if you don't find them the 1<sup>st</sup> time
- b. Document AS YOU GO
  - i. Partially fill out a research log BEFORE you search the census
  - ii. Summarize findings on the research log

- iii. Cite the source on the copy's front margin
- iv. State censuses are a little-used source and are hard to identify without proper documentation
- v. Good documentation improves correlation & analysis
- c. Analyze the family in community context
  - i. Extract full information on individuals in the area with the same surname
  - ii. Extract full information on individuals by another surname living in the same household
  - iii. Identify census neighbors, at least 12 before and after.
  - iv. If near a state or county line, study people with the same surname in nearby areas
  - v. Comb the neighborhood for families with similar origins, or occupations

## **VI. When ancestors are not in the records**

- a. Look for alternate spellings and name variations; for example, try the middle name, nickname, or initials only
- b. Try a first name only search, or an occupation search
- c. Look for them in the household of parents, siblings, children or grandchildren
- d. Check your documentation to see if they could have been in any other jurisdiction
- e. Check nearby surrounding jurisdictions
- f. Be creative:
  - i. Keep the surname, but . . .
    - 1. Search for the given name as an initial only
    - 2. Search for given name abbreviations (Wm, Jno)
    - 3. Search for nicknames (Polly for Mary, Bill for Wm)
    - 4. Drop first name, search for middle name or initial
    - 5. Search without any given names at all
  - ii. Search by first name
  - iii. Misspell the surname
  - iv. Use Soundex
  - v. Search for parents, siblings, and children
  - vi. Search line by line